



LIBERIA COUNTRY REPORT

April 2005

Country Information & Policy Unit

**IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY DIRECTORATE
HOME OFFICE, UNITED KINGDOM**

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1. Scope of Document

1.1 This Country Report has been produced by Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum / human rights determination process. The Report provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum / human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. It includes information available up to 1 March 2005.

1.2 The Country Report is compiled wholly from material produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources and does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy. All information in the Report is attributed, throughout the text, to the original source material, which is made available to those working in the asylum / human rights determination process.

1.3 The Report aims to provide a brief summary of the source material identified, focusing on the main issues raised in asylum and human rights applications. It is not intended to be a detailed or comprehensive survey. For a more detailed account, the relevant source documents should be examined directly.

1.4 The structure and format of the Country Report reflects the way it is used by Home Office caseworkers and appeals presenting officers, who require quick electronic access to information on specific issues and use the contents page to go directly to the subject required. Key issues are usually covered in some depth within a dedicated section, but may also be referred to briefly in several other sections. Some repetition is therefore inherent in the structure of the Report.

1.5 The information included in this Country Report is limited to that which can be identified from source documents. While every effort is made to cover all relevant aspects of a particular topic, it is not always possible to obtain the information concerned. For this reason, it is important to note that information included in the Report should not be taken to imply anything beyond what is actually stated. For example, if it is stated that a particular law has been passed, this should not be taken to imply that it has been effectively implemented; rather that information regarding implementation has not been found.

1.6 As noted above, the Country Report is a collation of material produced by a number of reliable information sources. In compiling the Report, no attempt has been made to resolve discrepancies between information provided in different source documents. For example, different source documents often contain different versions of names and spellings of individuals, places and political parties etc. Country Reports do not aim to bring consistency of spelling, but to reflect faithfully the spellings used in the original source documents. Similarly, figures given in different source documents sometimes vary and these are simply quoted as per the original text.

1.7 The Country Report is based substantially upon source documents issued during the previous two years. However, some older source documents may have been included because they contain relevant information not available in more recent documents. All sources contain information considered relevant at the time

this Report was issued.

1.8 This Country Report and the accompanying source material are public documents. All Country Reports are published on the IND section of the Home Office website and the great majority of the source material for the Report is readily available in the public domain. Where the source documents identified in the Report are available in electronic form, the relevant web link has been included, together with the date that the link was accessed. Copies of less accessible source documents, such as those provided by government offices or subscription services, are available from the Home Office upon request.

1.9 Country Reports are published every six months on the top 20 asylum producing countries and on those countries for which there is deemed to be a specific operational need. Inevitably, information contained in Country Reports is sometimes overtaken by events that occur between publication dates. Home Office officials are informed of any significant changes in country conditions by means of Country Information Bulletins, which are also published on the IND website. They also have constant access to an information request service for specific enquiries.

1.10 In producing this Country Report, the Home Office has sought to provide an accurate, balanced summary of the available source material. Any comments regarding this Report or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

**Country Information & Policy Unit
Home Office**

Apollo House
36 Wellesley Road
Croydon CR9 3RR

Email: CIPU@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Website: http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/country_information.html?

Advisory Panel on Country Information

1.11 The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information was established under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the Home Office's country information material. The Advisory Panel welcomes all feedback on the Home Office's Country Reports and other country information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at www.apci.org.uk.

1.12 It is not the function of the Advisory Panel to endorse any Home Office material or procedures. In the course of its work, the Advisory Panel directly reviews the content of selected individual Home Office Country Reports, but neither the fact that such a review has been undertaken, nor any comments made, should be taken to imply endorsement of the material. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

Advisory Panel on Country Information

PO Box 1539

Croydon CR9 3WR

Email apci@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Website www.apci.org.uk

2. Geography

2.1 The Europa Regional Surveys: Africa South of the Sahara 2005 (Europa) noted that the Republic of Liberia is a coastal West African state of approximately 97,754 sq kms, bordered by Sierra Leone to the west, the Republic of Guinea to the north and Côte d'Ivoire to the east. [1] (p619) The CIA World Factbook noted that as of 10 February 2005, Liberia was divided into "15 counties; Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Lofa, Margibi, Maryland, Montserrado, Nimba, River Cess, River Gee, Sinoe". [6] (p4) Europa also noted that the capital is Monrovia. The country itself is flat and densely forested, and consists of a wide coastal plain, with several low-lying hill ranges inland. Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) estimated that the population in mid-2004 was 3.36m. Liberia experiences two distinct rainy seasons in the south of the country, but in the north, only one from May to October, the climate is generally hot and humid throughout the year. The population is divided into 16 main indigenous tribal groups, plus groups of non-tribal Liberians and non-Liberian Africans. [1] (p619&637) [4a] (p3)

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3. Economy

3.1 US State Department's Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004 dated 28 February 2005 stated:

"Few statistics were available; however, economic activity, particularly in the informal sector, visibly increased following the 2003-04 deployment of UNMIL [United Nations Mission in Liberia] forces throughout the country and the initiation of disarmament exercises. An estimated 80 percent of the population lived on less than \$1 per day, and the country had an unemployment rate of at least 70 percent. Most of the population survived on income generated through the informal sector, predominantly consisting of buying and selling clothing and household effects, and on remittances from relatives abroad. There was little industry, and agricultural production remained low due to security concerns in rural areas; however, unlike in the previous year [2003], the Government generally paid civil servant salaries. The internal displacement of thousands of civilians throughout the countryside, particularly in Lofa, Bong, and Nimba Counties, the absence of police security, an increase in crime as former combatants sought alternative means of income, and the absence of infrastructure throughout the country continued to depress the economy, despite the country's rich natural resources and potential self sufficiency in food. Persons controlling former fighters continued to exploit the country's natural resources for personal profit. Extortion was widespread in all levels of society." [2a] (p1)

3.2 The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in its Country Report on Liberia dated 1 December 2004, noted a sustained improvement in the economic situation:

"The exchange rate against the US dollar has halved since the height of the crisis in mid-2003, to around L\$40:US\$1, as currency shortages have

dissipated. In 2004-05 the exchange rate will be supported by several factors: regular donor inflows, some relatively large capital investment inflows, strong remittance inflows and a fall in capital flight (of US dollars). Although demand for Liberian dollars will increase as salary payments in local currency are resumed, high levels of US dollars are also expected to remain in circulation, given the extent of donor activity and the resumption of business activity, much of which takes place in US dollars. Based on the competing effects of these influences, we forecast that the Liberian dollar will appreciate to an average of L\$35:US\$1 in 2005 and dip slightly, to average L\$40:US\$1, in 2006.” [4b] (p10)

3.3 The EIU in the same Report anticipated further improvements in the economic situation, and reported:

“As a result of the ending of conflict and the transition to peace, the prospects for economic growth have improved considerably. Following real GDP [Gross Domestic Product] growth of an estimated 21.8% in 2004, driven by increasing donor support and the gradual recovery of the manufacturing and services sectors, real GDP growth is forecast to expand further, although at a slightly slower pace, rising by 20% in 2005 and 18% in 2006. Growth will continue to be supported by donor inflows and a partial recovery of agricultural activities. It is clear that UNMIL's deployment has enhanced stability and will contribute to an increase in trading activity. The resumption of subsistence and commercial agriculture, and of mining and rubber production, is expected to take place relatively quickly—the return of displaced people will help in this respect. Those sectors that have been badly affected by the war—including logging, manufacturing and services—will take longer to recover; we expect that logging will still be subject to UN sanctions until around mid-2005. Nonetheless, with a legitimate government and reforms in place, the economy should become more attractive to investors, although it will take time for confidence to return given the extent of the recent crisis. Remittances from Liberians abroad make up an important and under-reported part of incomes and small-scale reconstruction projects.” [4b] (p9&10)

4. History

4.1 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in their country profile on Liberia dated 4 October 2004 noted:

“Liberia is the only West African country not to have been colonised. It was established as an independent state by freed slaves from America in 1847. The constitution is loosely based on that of the US. The UK was the first country to recognise its status as an independent state. For more than 130 years after independence, politics were dominated by descendants of the original settlers, known as the Americo-Liberians. In 1980 Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, a member of the indigenous Krahn ethnic group, seized power in a military coup. Widespread human rights abuses followed, leading to internal instability and international condemnation.” [3] (p1&2) The USSD Background Note on Liberia of February 2005 noted, “On December 24, 1989, a small band of rebels led by Doe's former procurement chief, Charles

Taylor, invaded Liberia from the Ivory Coast. Taylor and his National Patriotic Front rebels rapidly gained the support of Liberians because of the repressive nature of Samuel Doe and his government. Barely 6 months after the rebels first attacked, they had reached the outskirts of Monrovia.” [2c] (p3) The same report added, “The 1989-1996 Liberian civil war, which was one of Africa's bloodiest, claimed the lives of more than 200,000 Liberians and further displaced a million others into refugee camps in neighboring countries. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened and succeeded in preventing Charles Taylor from capturing Monrovia. Prince Johnson--who had been a member of Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) but broke away because of policy differences--formed the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). Johnson's forces captured and killed Doe on September 9, 1990.” The USSD, in the same document, also stated “Special elections were held on July 19, 1997, with Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Party [NPP] emerging victorious. Taylor won the election by a large majority, primarily because Liberians feared a return to war had Taylor lost.” [2c] (p3)

4.2 The FCO in their profile also noted “In 1999 fighting began in the north west of Liberia between President Taylor's armed forces and militias, and the rebel group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). LURD was a coalition of dissident groups operating out of Guinea. Its aim was to overthrow Charles Taylor. Guinea denied supporting LURD.” The FCO added “In January 2002 fighting escalated, spreading throughout northern and western Liberia to the outskirts of Monrovia. At the same time, the rebel group, Movement of Democracy for Liberia (MODEL), emerged in eastern Liberia. This was made up of disaffected Liberians, mercenaries and former LURD fighters mainly from the Krahn ethnic group.” The FCO also noted “In August [2003], Nigerian forces arrived in Monrovia as the vanguard of the ECOWAS international peace keeping force (ECOMIL). On 14 August [2003] President Taylor went into exile in Calabar, Nigeria and handed over power to his vice President Moses Blah to form an interim government.” [3] (p2) An Amnesty International document of 23 September 2004, noted that President Taylor is facing an indictment by the Special Court in Sierra Leone for crimes against humanity. This document provided an outline of the charges against him. [15c] (p1-11)

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5. State Structures

The Constitution

5.1 Europa Regional Surveys: Africa South of the Sahara 2005 (Europa) reflected that the Liberian Constitution came into effect on 6 January 1986, after being approved by a national referendum in July 1984. Liberia is a unitary state, with three separate branches of government, the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. The Constitution provides for certain fundamental human rights, and is supported by an independent judiciary. [1] (p641) The USSD 2004 stated:

“Liberia is a republic. The Constitution provides for three branches of government--executive, legislative, and judicial--but there has been no effective system of checks and balances, and presidents traditionally have wielded extraordinary power. In August 2003, the former government of Liberia and the country's two rebel groups--Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL)--signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the 1999-2003 civil war. Prior to the signing of the CPA, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) provided peacekeeping forces (ECOMIL) to separate the warring parties. In October 2003, U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) peacekeepers were deployed to further assist the peace process and provide stability during the post-conflict transition. In October 2003, the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), headed by Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant and Vice Chairman Wesley Johnson, replaced the government of former President Charles Taylor, who fled into exile after being indicted for war crimes”. [2a] (p1)

Citizenship

5.2 The requirements for citizenship are set out in chapter IV of the Liberian Constitution. Citizenship would appear to be acquired by descent from a Liberian citizen. Dual nationals must, upon reaching maturity, renounce any other citizenship that they may hold by descent from a foreign national. There is limited information regarding the acquisition of citizenship, but naturalisation is referred to in the Constitution. [17b] (p1-2)

5.3 USSD 2004 noted “Although the Constitution prohibits ethnic discrimination, it also provides that only “persons who are Negroes or of Negro descent” may be citizens or own land. Many persons of Lebanese and Asian descent who were born or have lived most of their lives in the country were denied full rights as a result of this racial distinction.” [2a] (Section 5)

Political System

5.4 The USSD 2004 stated:

“The Constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right in 1997 elections that international observers deemed administratively free and transparent; however, the elections were conducted in an atmosphere of intimidation, because most voters believed that military forces loyal to Taylor would have resumed the 1990-1996 civil war if he had lost. Because the legislative elections were held on the basis of proportional representation, Taylor's NPP won control of the former legislature by the same 75 percent majority that he received in the popular vote for the presidency. Elections to restore constitutional government were scheduled for October 2005. The CPA, negotiated between the warring parties, the registered political parties, and representatives from civil society, was designed to end several years of active conflict primarily between the Government and LURD. As a political compromise, the CPA suspends certain articles of the Constitution temporarily, but states that

articles not in conflict with the CPA remain in effect. The roles of president and vice president were replaced by a chairman and vice chairman, and ministries were apportioned based on political affiliation. The executive branch is headed by a Chairman and Vice Chairman. Ministerial positions are apportioned between members of the former warring parties, the registered political parties, and civil society. The NTGL has a unicameral legislature, the National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA), which replaced the Congress in October 2003; Bryant assumed the role of Chairman.” [2a] (Section 3)

5.5 Several US Government and UK Foreign Office sources reflect that on 14 October 2003, Gyude Bryant, a former Liberian businessman, was inaugurated as Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), with Wesley Johnson as vice-chairman. The NTGL has 21 ministries, with 5 each going to representatives from the previous Liberian Government, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). The remaining seats were allocated to other political parties. The NTGL will remain in power until October 2005, when it is intended that full elections will be held. [3] (p2) [12] (p1)

5.6 In December 2004, the UN Secretary-General in his progress report on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), noted the following:

“During the reporting period [covering events in the last quarter of 2004], further progress was made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and in the peace process. Such progress included the official completion of disarmament and demobilization on 31 October 2004, the formal disbandment of the armed factions on 3 November [2004], the commencement of the repatriation of refugees on 1 October [2004] and also the resettlement of internally displaced persons on 8 November [2004]. Furthermore, State authority has been extended to several additional counties and the training of recruits for the new Liberian National Police Service has continued. However, the process also encountered several major challenges, including the troubling disturbances that took place from 28 to 31 October [2004], the continued disputes among the leadership of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), violent demonstrations by various disaffected groups and the slow progress in the reintegration of ex-combatants. Additional challenges include the limited capacity on the part of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to provide social services and consolidate State authority, the disputes among the former armed factions regarding the distribution of government posts, and the delays in the passage of the electoral reform bill.” [18f] (p1)

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Judiciary

5.7 The USSD 2004 stated the following:

“Although the Constitution provides for an independent judiciary, judges were subject to political, social, familial, and financial pressures, and the judiciary

was corrupt. Courts regularly received bribes or other illegal gifts out of damages that they awarded in civil cases. Defense attorneys often suggested that their clients pay a gratuity to appease judges, prosecutors, and police officers to secure favorable rulings. Some judges and magistrates were not lawyers. By statute members of the bar must be graduates of a law school and pass the bar examination; however, the judiciary determined that it was not feasible to retire all judicial personnel who were not legally trained. There were frequent reports of executive branch influence over the judiciary.”
[2a] (Section 1e)

5.8 The USSD 2004 went on to state “The judiciary is divided into four levels, with the Supreme Court at the apex. Unlike in the previous year [2003], all levels of the court system in Monrovia, including the Supreme Court, operated regularly. The Government was unable to revitalize the court system outside of Monrovia due to the war and a lack of trained personnel, a lack of infrastructure, and inadequate funding. Although judges were assigned throughout the country, in some cases they were unable to hold court due to lack of security, supplies, or equipment.”
[2a] (Section 1e)

5.9 The USSD in their Background Note on Liberia of February 2005 added:

“There is a Supreme Court, criminal courts, and appeals court and magistrate courts in the counties. There also are traditional courts and lay courts in the counties. Trial by ordeal is practiced in various parts of Liberia. The basic unit of local government is the town chief. There are clan chiefs, paramount chiefs, and district commissioners. Mayors are elected in principal cities in Liberia. The counties are governed by superintendents appointed by the president.” [2c]
(p4)

5.10 The USSD 2004 also noted:

“Under the Constitution, defendants have due process rights; however, in practice these rights were not always observed. Defendants in criminal trials enjoy a presumption of innocence and have the right to an attorney, to confront witnesses in a public trial, and to appeal adverse decisions; however, many of these protections were not available to defendants who could not pay bribes. There was no effective system to provide public defenders, especially in rural areas. Some local NGOs [Non-Government organisations] provided legal services to indigents and others who had no representation. There continued to be long delays in deciding cases involving juveniles.” [2a]
(Section 1e)

5.11 Human Rights Watch in their Overview on Liberia for 2004 noted the following:

“Court personnel including magistrates, lawyers and judges have for decades been subject to poor conditions of service including low salaries. Their judicial independence has been compromised by political interference and corruption. Numerous courtrooms were looted and destroyed during the war and at present the judicial system lacks basic resources and personnel. There are very few detention facilities and prisons. Funding to rehabilitate court and prison infrastructure, and adequately train and remunerate court staff,

including public defenders, prosecutors and judges, is urgently needed and should be a priority for the international community.” [16] (p2)

Legal Rights/Detention

5.12 According to the USSD 2004:

“The Constitution provides for the rights of the accused, including warrants for arrests and the right of detainees either to be charged or released within 48 hours; however, warrants were not always based on sufficient evidence, and detainees, particularly those without the means to hire a lawyer, often were held for more than 48 hours without charge. The law also provides for bail, which was determined primarily by the severity of the alleged crime. The law provides for prompt access to counsel; however, the Government did not ensure such access for all detainees. In the past, security forces sometimes refused to produce suspects being held in detention without charges even after the courts issued writs of habeas corpus on the application of human rights organizations.” [2a] (Section 1d)

5.13 The USSD 2004 stated “The Constitution provides for the right of a person who is charged to receive an expeditious trial; however, lengthy pretrial and pre-arraignment detention remained serious problems. In some cases, the length of the pretrial detention equaled (sic) or exceeded the length of sentence for the crime.” [2a] (Section 1e) The report also noted “Unlike in the previous year [2003], there were no reports that security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained journalists, NGO members, human rights activists, religious leaders, and students; however, there were a few arbitrary arrests, and the NTLA threatened to arrest persons who criticized the NTLA...” [2a] (Section 1d)

Death Penalty

5.14 As noted in Amnesty International’s (AI) Country Report covering 2003, Liberia retains the death penalty, but there have been no reports of it being used in recent years. [15a] (p1)

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Internal Security

5.15 The EIU, in its Liberian country profile of July 2004 noted “Model (sic) was strongly supported by Côte d’Ivoire; its members are mostly ethnic Krahn, like those of another civil war faction, Ulimo-J [United Liberation Movement for Democracy]. LURD, on the other hand, was heavily backed by Guinea. It is dominated by members of the Mandingo (Malinké) ethnic group, which also constituted most of Ulimo-K during the 1990s, and was formed in April 1999 when several veteran Taylor opponents in Ulimo-K reorganised themselves as LURD.” [4a] (p7)

5.16 The USSD 2004 stated the following:

“The country's security forces include the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), which are responsible for external security but also have domestic security responsibilities, the interim Liberian National Police (LNP), which have primary responsibility for law enforcement, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), which investigates crime, the Special Security Service (SSS), which provides executive protection, the National Security Agency (NSA), which is responsible for internal and external intelligence, and the Ministry of National Security, which assists the NSA and is responsible for investigating financial crimes. The AFL is under the Ministry of Defense, the LNP and NBI are under the Ministry of Justice, and the SSS, NSA, and Ministry of National Security are under the Office of the NTGL Chairman. There also were numerous irregular security services attached to certain key ministries and parastatal corporations that did not belong to a permanent, organized military force and whose responsibilities appeared to be poorly defined. Unlike in the previous year [2003], civilian authorities maintained effective control of the security forces; however, there were some instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently of government authority. Under the NTGL, a few members of the security forces committed isolated human rights abuses.” [2a] (p1)

5.17 USSD 2004 noted “By June [2004], UNMIL had deployed more than 14,000 peacekeepers and 1,100 international police (CIVPOL) throughout the country. By October [2004], more than 100,000 former combatants and camp followers had been disarmed and demobilized under the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration Program (DDRR).” [2a] (p1) The EIU in its Country Report on Liberia dated December 2004, added:

“Despite initial estimates of there being between 35,000 and 50,000 combatants involved in Liberia's civil war, by its close on 31st October 2004 the disarmament programme sponsored by the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) had disarmed and demobilised a total of 95,615 former combatants, including 9,251 children and 17,147 women. The success of the programme comes in spite of a violent beginning to disarmament in December 2003 and a late start reaching combatants in Lofa county and Liberia's south-eastern counties, the respective bases of operation for Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (Model) rebels. Nevertheless, concerns remain that very little heavy weaponry was handed over—only about one in three participants even turned in a weapon—and that some former fighters may still be trying to hold open the option of a return to war ... Reports suggest that the largest remaining stockpiles of weapons may be deep in the bush along Liberia's borders with Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, ready for use in those countries (there are also reports that some fighters may have been holding on to weapons in the hope of exchanging them for a higher pay-out in Côte d'Ivoire, once disarmament begins there). However, by and large the disarmament process was carried out relatively effectively, without violence or large-scale resistance from the former warring factions.” [4b] (p11&12)

5.18 EIU in its Country Report of 1 December 2004 also noted:

“Paradoxically, the major problem now is in part a result of the success of the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and

Reintegration's disarmament exercise, leaving insufficient funding and capacity for the urgently needed next step of rehabilitation and reintegration (RR). Just over 20,000 ex-combatants have been through the RR portion of disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration thus far, leaving a large shortfall of fighters whose expectations have been lifted by promises of social programmes and job training. Securing additional funds and getting these programmes up and running remains a critical component of the effective implementation of the peace process. In the meantime, a large number of ex-combatants have ended up in the capital, Monrovia, becoming a potentially volatile part of the city's estimated 1m people.” [4b] (p13)

5.19 In December 2004, the UN Secretary-General in his progress report UNMIL, referred to an outbreak of rioting in Monrovia from 28 to 31 October 2004:

“While investigations into the causes of the October [2004] disturbances continue, reports indicate that a land dispute may have triggered the initial rioting, which rapidly assumed ethnic and religious dimensions involving members of the predominantly Mandingo ethnic group. At the same time, the situation was also repeatedly exploited for their own ends by disgruntled combatants awaiting reintegration, loyalists of former President Charles Taylor and some elements of the opposing factions within LURD. During the disturbances, a number of houses belonging to Aisha Conneh (the estranged wife of the LURD Chairperson, Sekou Conneh) and members of the LURD faction loyal to her, were the targets of attacks. In addition, several churches, mosques and residential and commercial properties were burnt down in Monrovia. A mosque was also burned in Kakata.” [18fg] (p1&2)

5.20 The report added:

“UNMIL initially responded to the riots by deploying its civilian police and formed police units in Monrovia. As the situation escalated, UNMIL troops undertook robust actions to bring the situation under control and forestall further acts of violence in the affected areas. A United Nations infantry company was redeployed from Buchanan, while two formed police units were redeployed from Gbarnga and Buchanan to Monrovia. The UNMIL Quick Reaction Force conducted robust patrols in all areas of Monrovia, while its aviation unit undertook both aerial reconnaissance and show-of-force patrols over the city. In addition, troops conducted cordon and search operations based on information received by UNMIL. The main roads into Monrovia were also sealed, following reports that former LURD elements were being brought in from Bomi county.” [18fg] (p2)

5.21 The UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) noted in a report dated 3 November 2004, “The heads of Liberia's three factions on Wednesday [3 November 2004] signed an agreement to dissolve their movements' military wings and do away with violence, paving the way for them to stand at next year's elections.” The report added “The former government of ex-president Charles Taylor, as well as two former rebel groups -- Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) -- all promised a peaceful future in a ceremony in the capital, Monrovia, which came three

days after the UN-led disarmament programme officially ended.” [5c] (p1)

5.22 Notwithstanding these positive developments, the completion of the disarmament process and the agreement to disband armed factions, the lack of funds to assist ex-combatants remains a continuing problem. IRIN in a report dated 27 January 2005 noted that violence had broken out in other areas of Liberia, with disgruntled ex-combatants demanding that the authorities address their needs:

“A group of 200 former rebel fighters rioted in Gbarnga, a town in northern Liberia, earlier this week to protest at the United Nations' failure to pay them the second half of their US\$300 resettlement allowance, eyewitnesses told IRIN. UN peacekeepers intervened quickly to restore order, they added. The pre-dawn protest on Wednesday [26 January 2005] followed recent admissions by UN and government officials that the authorities had run out of money to fund the rehabilitation of more than 100,000 former combatants who were disarmed last year following a 14-year civil war.” [5g] (p1)

5.23 The IRIN article reflected ongoing concerns about the lack of discipline, and provisions for assisting former combatants, which has implications for security in the country as a whole. [5g] (p1)

5.24 Human Rights Watch in their Overview on Liberia for 2004 noted the following:

“Protection of the civilian population remains an urgent priority, particularly given serious institutional deficiencies within the national police force and judicial system. By the end of 2004, peacekeepers from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) were deployed in all major towns and along most highways. Prior to this deployment and the disarming of ex-combatants there were frequent reports of harassment of civilians, forced labor in rubber and diamond producing areas, extortion at market places, looting of foodstuffs intended for aid distribution, assaults against aid workers, illegal checkpoints, and looting. Civilians living in rural areas beyond the reach of UNMIL peacekeepers remain particularly vulnerable to attacks by demobilized combatants from all former factions. Women and girls living within camps for the internally displaced remain vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation, primarily by other camp residents.” [16] (p1)

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Border security and relations with neighbouring countries

5.25 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in their country profile on Liberia dated 4 October 2004 noted “The Mano River Union (MRU) was formed in 1973 to establish a customs and economic union between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Subsequently, members signed a mutual non-aggression pact and pledged to establish a permanent mechanism for conflict prevention. Despite this, relations between the three countries have not always been easy and the MRU has failed to live up to its original ideals. It was relaunched in May 2004 at a meeting in Conakry, Guinea.” [3] (p3) The FCO’s profile added “For years there has been tension

and conflict between Liberia and Guinea. Between August 2000 and April 2001 forces loyal to President Taylor attacked and blighted much of southern Guinea. Guinea responded robustly. Liberia accused Guinea of sponsoring the LURD, Guinea has consistently denied this.” [3] (p3)

5.26 The FCO in their country profile also stated “Liberia involved itself in the later stages of the uprising in Côte d'Ivoire. Liberian troops, militia groups and mercenaries have been involved in fighting looting and human rights abuses in the west of Côte d'Ivoire. Liberian civilians fleeing the conflict have faced reprisals from the Ivorian population.” [3] (p3)

5.27 The EIU in its Country Report on Liberia dated 1 December 2004:

“Relations with the international community and within the region should continue to improve, given the demise of Mr Taylor's government. However, the collapse of the French-sponsored peace process and the resumption of hostilities in Côte d'Ivoire between the southern-based government of Laurent Gbagbo and the northern-based New Forces has created a new set of risks for Liberia. For the moment, Mr Bryant is keeping a low profile and seeking to keep Liberia neutral in Ivorian affairs. Despite long and porous borders between the two countries, the training of border guards and the presence of UNMIL troops should make any spillage of conflict into Liberia unlikely, even if small numbers of ex-combatants continue to become involved as mercenaries. In the near term the main problem for Liberia will be an influx of refugees from Côte d'Ivoire and the strain that this is likely to place on already stretched donor resources. Threats of unrest in the forest region of Guinea are a further source of tension in the subregion, and are exacerbated by uncertainty over who might succeed that country's ailing president, Lansana Conté. Continued attention from the international community, including the UN Security Council and the Economic Community of West African States, will be necessary to ensure that the current stability in Liberia is protected and any large-scale regional conflict averted.” [4b] (p7)

Prisons and Prison Conditions

5.28 According to the USSD 2004:

“Prison conditions were harsh and in some cases life threatening; however, unlike in the previous year [2003], there were no reports that the Government operated unofficial detention facilities where detainees were tortured. The Government did not provide detainees or prisoners with adequate food or medical care. Cells at Monrovia Central Prison were overcrowded, mostly with detainees awaiting trial; however, during the year [2004], international organizations began providing food and hygiene to the prison. In some counties, the structure that served as a jail was a container with bars at one end. There also were reports that local officials forced prisoners to work for them.” [2a] (Section 1c)

5.29 The USSD 2004 also reported that “Unlike in the previous year [2003], there

were no reports that the Government used house arrest or held political detainees.” [2a] (Section 1c)

5.30 The USSD 2004 stated “Women were held in separate cells in conditions comparable to those of the male prisoners and detainees. There were no separate facilities for juvenile offenders. Women and particularly juveniles were subject to abuse by guards or other inmates. Convicted prisoners and detainees awaiting trial were not held in separate facilities.” [2a] (Section 1c)

5.31 The USSD 2004 stated that “The Government permitted the independent monitoring of prison conditions by local human rights groups, the media, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Some human rights groups, including the ICRC, paid regular visits to detainees at police headquarters and prisoners at the Monrovia Central Prison.” [2a] (Section 1c)

5.32 In December 2004, the UN Secretary-General in his progress report on the UNMIL, noted the following:

“The UNMIL corrections component has continued to work with the Ministry of Justice and other partners in improving the correctional system. The Monrovia Central Prison and the prisons in Kakata, Bondiway, Sanniquellie and Gbarnga are currently operational, while the recently renovated Buchanan prison is expected to reopen shortly. The October [2004] disturbances in Liberia highlighted some of the key problems associated with the correctional facilities. The prison population, which usually averages about 287, rose to 550 during the disturbances. As a result of inadequate staffing and the poor conditions of buildings, a number of escapes occurred from various facilities. Within Monrovia, the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the World Food Programme (WFP) are providing prisoners with daily food rations, while outside the city, food is supplied solely by WFP. Medical and hygiene supplies are also provided by private individuals and the International Committee of the Red Cross. UNMIL is currently working with the Ministry of Justice to develop a budget for basic necessities.” [18f] (p7)

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Armed forces

5.33 All sides during the civil conflict forcibly recruited children. Some of these were employed as soldiers, or in a support capacity. Provision for the re-integration into society remains limited, but NGOs are beginning to deploy to address this need. [15b] (p1,2,16&17)

5.34 An IRIN report of 6 December 2004, noted that the Government is taking steps to reform the armed forces, ‘The US ambassador to Liberia, John Blaney, said last week that his government had already set aside US\$ 35 million to carry out the army restructuring before general elections, scheduled for October 2005. “Training the military is a long-term process,” Blaney told reporters. “The intention of the US is to start this process in the first half of 2005. We have about 35 million earmarked for this task.”’ The report added “Disarmament has now been completed in the heavily-

forested West African country, with more than 102,000 men, women and children disarmed and around 27,000 weapons handed in. Rebels and militia groups formally disbanded last month in line with a peace deal signed in August 2003 and now attention is turning to reviving a national force, which has been effectively redundant since 1989.” [5d] (p1)

Police

5.35 The USSD 2004 noted:

“During the year [2004], CIVPOL [international police operating with UNMIL] assisted with the restructuring, recruitment, training, and equipping of an interim police force until a full replacement force could be trained. This interim LNP [Liberian National Police] was staffed with police officers who served under the former Taylor administration, excluding those who were hired during that administration. The interim LNP operated independently and retained arrest authority; however, CIVPOL accompanied LNP officers in joint patrols around Monrovia.” [2a] (Section 1d)

5.36 The USSD 2004 also reported:

“There were reports of police brutality, particularly during demonstrations. Police handling of mob violence resulted in deaths ... Police had limited logistics and forensic capabilities and did not adequately investigate many crimes, including murder cases. When the courts released known criminals for lack of evidence, police officers often arrested them again on false charges. During the year [2004], CIVPOL and UNMIL investigated some alleged abuses by the LNP,... However, corruption remained widespread, and abusers were seldom charged or disciplined. Public confidence in the police remained low.” [2a] (Section 1d)

5.37 The British Broadcasting Corporation in a report dated 12 January 2004 noted that the UN had assisted with the training and deployment of new police units.

“About 600 new recruits have tentatively begun policing Liberia's severely potholed streets and chaotic traffic. They are part of a new 3,500-strong United Nations-trained police force.” The report added “The plan is to use the UN-trained force to replace and augment the existing and discredited force. Liberia's old police became factionalised during the country's civil war and the previous administration saturated every fabric of the force with their untrained loyalists. Unlike in the past, those being recruited into the new force must have a high school education and no criminal record.” [7b] (p1)

Military Service

5.38 The War Resisters International (WRI) survey of 1998, indicated that there is no conscription in Liberia. However, the USSD 2004, and an IRIN article of 9 June 2003, noted that both rebel and Government militias have forcibly recruited people into their ranks, and these recruits have included children. [5a] (p1) [9]

Medical Services

5.39 Europa Regional Surveys: Africa South of the Sahara 2005 (Europa) indicated that the medical infrastructure remains under-funded and under-resourced. The health system had already been damaged by years of civil conflict, and was in a poor state of repair, prior to the latest upsurge in violence. [1] (p630)

5.40 The EIU in its Liberian country profile of July 2004, stated:

“According to World Bank estimates for 2002, life expectancy has risen again, to 47 years (the same as the average for Sub-Saharan Africa). The UN Development Programme's Human Development Report 2004 put life expectancy at birth at 41.4 years during the period 2000-05. The mortality rate for children under five years old remains extremely high, at an estimated 235 per 1,000 live births in 2002, according to the report. The World Bank presently estimates a ratio of only 0.2 doctors per 10,000 people in post-war Liberia. Malnutrition and disease, including cholera and yellow fever, have been rife. Since the end of the conflict, the government, with the assistance of donors, has rehabilitated a number of clinics and hospitals, though healthcare provision remains rudimentary.” [4a] (p18-19)

5.41 The UN Development Programme's Human Development Report 2004, records little improvement during 2003 in its quoted development indicators. [11]

5.42 The EIU in its Liberian country profile of July 2004, noted:

“In a statement issued to the 26th special session of the UN General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in June 2001, the then Liberian health minister, Peter Coleman, put Liberia's HIV/AIDS prevalence rate at 8.2%. According to the UN programme on AIDS and HIV (UNAIDS) in Monrovia, 4% of women attending antenatal clinics tested positive for HIV in 1992 and 1993. In 1996 and 1997 HIV testing at various sites found no evidence of HIV infection among antenatal clinic attendees. In 1999, however, at an unspecified site, 12.7% of antenatal clinic attendees were found to be HIV-positive. These figures are likely to be an under-reporting of the true extent of the problem. UNAIDS estimates that 100,000 adults and children were HIV-infected at end-2003. There has been no update of these data as of July 2004. This lack of data is not surprising given the general low level and quality of official domestic data across the economy.” [4a] (p19)

5.43 The EIU in its Liberian country profile of July 2004, also noted:

“The National Aids Control Programme, supported by limited assistance from China and France, has undertaken a number of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns over recent years. However, with lawlessness in some northern counties—due to rebel incursions—rape and sexual promiscuity are thought to have increased HIV infection rates. In addition, returnees from the

conflicts in Guinea and Sierra Leone (both refugees and soldiers) will have helped to spread the pandemic.” [4a] (p19)

5.44 IRIN, in a report of 28 January 2005, noted that within the medical profession there were disputes regarding wages “Nurses and doctors are refusing to return to work in the Liberian countryside because their salaries are too small and often late and the transitional government's promise to pay 18-months of salary arrears has failed to materialise.” The report added that “The pay dispute is hampering efforts to restore basic services to more remote corners of Liberia, which is set to hold its first post-war elections in October [2005].” [5h] (p1)

5.45 Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), in their report of January 2005 entitled top 10 Most Underreported Humanitarian Crises of 2004 noted the following:

“Intense fighting during the summer of 2003 in Liberia’s capital, Monrovia, cost more than 2,000 people their lives. More than a year after this debilitating 15-year civil war ended, though, Liberians are still living in a state of crisis. Little of the country’s demolished infrastructure remains, leaving most people without basic services like water and sanitation. More than 300,000 people are still displaced within the country while 300,000 refugees wait to return from neighboring countries. Health care, already scarce in the main cities, hardly exists at all in remote areas of the country. Today, there are only 30 Liberian physicians working in a country with more than three million people. In Bong County, MSF provides 7,000 consultations a month for 60,000 displaced people. Some families are returning to Lofa County, but virtually nothing by way of essential services has been prepared for them. The return of refugees to Nimba County, where MSF provides 5,600 consultations a month, could exacerbate ethnic tensions. Women continue to be victimized by sexual violence, as well – from October 2003 to July 2004 alone, more than 800 people came to MSF for treatment from camps housing 35,000 displaced people north of Monrovia.” [8]

People with disabilities

5.46 According to the USSD 2003:

“It is illegal to discriminate against persons with disabilities; however, in practice, they did not enjoy equal access to public buildings or government services, and no laws mandate such access. As a result of the civil wars, a large number of persons had permanent disabilities, in addition to those disabled by accident or illness. Persons with disabilities faced discrimination, particularly in rural areas. Babies with deformities often were abandoned. Some NGOs provided services to persons with disabilities.” [2a] (Section 5)

Educational System

5.47 Europa states that primary and secondary education is free, and officially

compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16 years. However, the closure or disruption of educational institutions during the civil conflict has deprived many children of even the most basic education. [1] (p645)

5.48 The USSD 2004 stated:

“The Government generally was unable to provide for the education and health of children. Due to the poor condition of government schools, many children who attended school, particularly in Monrovia, went to private institutions. Since many private schools still needed to be refurbished due to wartime damage, school fees remained relatively high, thereby making education unattainable for many school-age children. In both public and private schools, families of children often were asked to provide their own books, pencils, paper, and even desks. According to a 2003 UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] report, more than half of school-age children did not attend school.” [2a] (Section 5)

5.49 As part of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration Program (DDRR), some former combatants were to have access to education. In a report of 13 January 2005, IRIN noted that this had been hampered by a lack of funds, “Last month [December 2004], UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a report to the Security Council that Liberia urgently needed \$60 million to cover shortfalls in the programme to rehabilitate more than 100,000 former combatants who registered for disarmament.” [5i] (p1) In a report dated 2 February 2005, IRIN reported that the United Nations had subsequently allocated funds to pay for school fees. [5i] (p1)

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6. Human Rights

6.A Human Rights Issues

Overview

6.1 A brief outline of the human rights situation was given in the US State Department's Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004, dated 28 February 2005:

“Prior to the resignation of President Taylor, the Government's human rights record remained poor, and security forces committed numerous, serious abuses; however, during the year [2004], the Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens, although problems continued in some areas. Interim LNP [Liberian National Police] officers sometimes abused, harassed, and intimidated persons. Prison conditions remained harsh and sometimes life threatening. Corruption and official impunity were problems, and there was little investigation into abuses committed during the

war. The LNP continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention, and lengthy pretrial detention was common. The judicial system was unable to ensure citizens' rights to due process and a fair trial. During the year [2004], the National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA) threatened to arrest persons who criticized the NTLA. In some rural areas where the judiciary had not been reestablished, clan chieftains administered criminal justice through the traditional practice of trial-by-ordeal; however, unlike in the past, authorities did not tacitly condone the practice. Incidents of ritualistic killings persisted. Violence and discrimination against women were problems. The welfare of children widely remained neglected, and female genital mutilation (FGM) continued to be practiced. Societal ethnic discrimination remained widespread, and ethnic differences continued to generate violence and political tensions. Forced labor persisted in rural areas. Child labor remained widespread, and there were reports of forced child labor. There were reports of trafficking, and the Government obstructed the prosecution of a trafficking case during the year [2004]." [2a] (p1&2)

6.2 The United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) stated in its country profile of 4 October 2004 that "President Taylor's regime was contemptuous of democratic principles and human rights. Taylor used the escalating conflict in Liberia to justify increased repression. Arbitrary arrests, forced conscription and the reported torture and murder of suspected dissident sympathisers, human rights campaigners and journalists became commonplace. The continuing disregard for human rights where civil conflict still exists is of concern. The warring factions used sexual violence and torture as weapons, and child soldiers. This continues to be a problem in the transition to peace. The UN Mission in Liberia has a robust mandate to monitor and uphold human rights and protect civilians." [3] (p3)

6.3 The USSD 2004 also stated:

"Some former rebel combatants continued to commit human rights abuses, including the arbitrary detention, extortion, theft, rape, and battery of civilians, particularly IDPs [Internal Displaced Persons], forcible conscription, including of children, and the blocking of humanitarian assistance. UNMIL peacekeepers, DDRR [Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration Program] exercises, and CIVPOL's [international police operating with UNMIL] support for the interim LNP and training of a new police service improved security throughout the country and helped facilitate governmental efforts to improve human rights. Since the NTGL assumed power, there have been no reports that government security forces were responsible for unlawful killings, summary executions, disappearances, or torture. There have also been no reports that the Government restricted freedom of speech and of the press, detained and intimidated journalists, restricted freedom of movement, harassed human rights monitors, or discriminated against particular ethnic groups." [2a] (p2)

Freedom of Speech and the Media

6.4 The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in their report on Liberia for 2003 noted the following:

“During his six-year rule, Taylor ruthlessly cracked down on the political opposition and civil society activists to consolidate his power. As the last remaining openly critical sector of society, the Liberian private media, which Taylor regarded with a mix of suspicion and contempt, was continually subject to government repression. The Taylor government’s tactics for silencing critics were varied. Police banned independent radio stations perceived to have an “antigovernment” editorial line, and, using pretexts such as tax evasion, they closed newspapers that exposed government corruption or rights abuses. As the war between government forces and the rebel Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) intensified, the Taylor regime tightened its grip on information, imposing censorship policies that required all news stories on the rebellion to receive approval from the Information Ministry before publication or broadcast.” [20] (p1)

6.5 In the second half of 2003, the Government demonstrated a more co-operative attitude to the media. The CPJ in its report added that the present Government actions would appear to support its intention to address this issue:

‘Good news for Liberian journalists seemed to arrive with the October 14 [2003] inauguration of Gyude Bryant as chairman of the new transitional government. In his inauguration speech, the former Monrovia businessman and activist for democratic reform declared, “This government will encourage and exercise the freedom of speech and of the press which constitutes one of the basic tenets of good governance. It is only when people are free to speak, write, and print that they can help keep the government accountable and transparent.”’ [20] (p3&4)

6.6 The EIU in its country profile on Liberia of July 2004, noted:

“Liberia’s state television station, ELTV, was off the air for most of the war, but has resumed broadcasting as a largely commercial station. There are two private television stations broadcasting for short periods of the day and several FM radio stations in the capital, which are often prone to government shutdowns. Few stations have a national reach. International radio stations, especially the BBC World Service and the US Voice of America, are widely listened to. There are numerous independent newspapers, but press freedom under the Taylor government was not largely tolerated, although some improvements are expected under the new government.” [4a] (p20)

6.7 The US State Department’s Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004, dated 28 February 2005:

“The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press; however, the Government restricted these rights in practice, although less frequently than in previous years. Unlike in the past, there were no reports that security agents detained or assaulted journalists or that cabinet ministers forced journalists to drop or modify critical articles; however, during the year [2004], the NTLA

threatened to arrest persons who criticized the legislative body or refused to appear before it. In the past, there were reports of journalistic self-censorship; however, there were no such reports during the year [2004]. Unlike in previous years, the Government did not restrict academic freedom. The University of Liberia reopened in March [2004].” [2a] (Section 2a)

6.8 According to the USSD 2004:

“In Monrovia, there were 18 newspapers that published during the year [2004], with varying degrees of regularity. Two were independent dailies and five usually appeared at least once a week. Their political orientation ranged between criticism and support of the Government. All newspapers were printed through one printing facility; however, unlike in previous years, the Government did not pressure facility managers not to print critical articles.” [2a] (Section 2a)

6.9 Liberia’s media is highly dependent on radio. According to the USSD 2004:

“Due to the high price of newspapers, the high rate of illiteracy (estimated at 75 percent), high transportation costs, and the poor state of roads elsewhere in the country, newspaper distribution generally was limited to the Monrovia region. As a result, radio was the primary means of mass communication. There were at least five FM stations that regularly broadcast in Monrovia. Most stations broadcast daily from 5:00 a.m. to midnight. Call-in radio talk shows were popular and frequently a forum for both government and opposition viewpoints. Interviews with prominent persons were broadcast frequently. Unlike in the previous year [2003], the Government did not pressure radio stations that broadcast critical views. There were three local television stations; however, television was limited to those who could purchase sets, generators, and fuel to provide electricity. For those persons and businesses with satellite capability, CNN [Cable News Network] and BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] generally were available.” [2a] (Section 2a)

6.10 The USSD 2004 noted “Unlike in the previous year [2003], there were no reports that the Government harassed, arbitrarily arrested, or assaulted journalists who criticized the Government; closed or vandalized media outlets; threatened advertisers who did business with such outlets; required journalists to apologize in writing prior to releasing them; censored local reporting on the insurgency; or harassed international correspondents by suspending their credentials or imposing irregular accreditation fees.” [2a] (Section 2a)

Journalists

6.11 Reporters Without Borders (Reporters sans frontières) in their report on Liberia covering 2003 noted:

“The war that raged during the summer of 2003 between forces loyal to former President Charles Taylor and the rebels of the LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) and MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia) had serious repercussions on the Liberian press. All the newspapers

stopped appearing at one point or another. The premises of the main privately-owned daily newspapers and radio stations were destroyed or ransacked by combatants. Many journalists fled the capital and went into hiding or abroad. Even the news media that escaped ransacking suffered catastrophic financial losses as all of the country's economic activities were paralysed for three months. Nonetheless, some 15 newspapers were back on sale a few weeks after the war ended. Most opted to publish weekly because they could not afford a daily edition. Advertisers became so scarce that air time on a commercial radio station could be obtained for 10 dollars a minute in September [2003]." [19] (p1)

6.12 Reporters Without Borders also noted in its report:

"Shortly after being appointed to lead the National Transition Government of Liberia (NTGL) at the end of August [2003], Gyude Bryant lifted a ban on the privately-owned Star Radio dating back to March 2000. He asked the press to go back to work in order to inform the public about the peace process now under way. However, the press group owned by former President Charles Taylor, consisting of a daily newspaper, a radio station, a TV station, a printing works and an Internet Service Provider, collapsed after he went into exile. Some employees, who had not been paid for several months, stole the most valuable equipment." [19] (p1)

6.13 The CPJ in its report noted the following:

"After Taylor's departure, journalists continued to fear reprisals from Taylor loyalists who remained in Monrovia. Their fears seemed warranted when, in early October [2003], the United Nations found that Taylor was still meddling in Liberian internal affairs from exile. Meanwhile, LBS [Liberian Broadcasting System] journalists protested the reappointment of J. Allison Barco as director-general of the state broadcaster, accusing Barco of corruption and partisanship toward Taylor and his National Patriotic Party (NPP). NPP members of the transitional government had been tasked with appointing the LBS director. Barco was later replaced, local sources said." [20] (p4&6)

6.14 Notwithstanding these concerns, the CPJ in its report noted the following:

"But journalists were more sanguine about the press's prospects once the transitional administration took over; U.N. peacekeepers had firm control over the capital, and disarmament of the warring factions had begun [as of the end of 2003]. Sources in Monrovia said the biggest obstacle to the media was no longer government repression but finding the funding to surmount the damage caused by the war and to sustain the press in a shattered economy. Nonetheless, by year's end [2004], several new publications had appeared on Monrovia newsstands—a sign, journalists said, of the population's eagerness to engage in the country's future." [20] (p5)

6.15 However, the USSD 2004 noted "During the year [2004], journalists reportedly extorted money from citizens by threatening to publish negative articles about them and accepted bribes from politicians to publish negative articles about their

opponents.” [2a] (Section 2a) According to the same report “Unlike in the previous year [2003], there were no attacks on journalists by unknown persons, rebel abductions of journalists, or looting and burning of the homes of journalists.” [2a] (Section 2a)

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Freedom of Religion

6.16 The USSD Religious Freedom Report (RFR) for 2004 stated “The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. Since taking office, the NTGL at all levels strives to protect this right in full and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. Unlike the Taylor Government, the NTGL did not harass, marginalize, or attempt to intimidate the Muslim population. The NTGL encouraged religious freedom. There is no state religion. However, government ceremonies invariably open and close with prayer and may include the singing of hymns. The prayers and hymns are usually Christian, but are occasionally Islamic.” [2b] (Section II)

6.17 According to the USSD RFR 2004, “All organizations, including religious groups, must register their articles of incorporation with the government, along with a statement of the purpose of the organization; however, traditional indigenous religious groups are not required to register, and generally do not register. Registration is routine, and there were no reports that the registration process was burdensome or discriminatory in its administration.” [2b] (Section II)

6.18 The USSD RFR 2004 stated:

“In the past, former President Charles Taylor divided the National Muslim Council of Liberia by seeding the Council with his loyalists. To undermine the independence of the Council, former President Taylor sponsored the expulsion of Sheik Kafumba Konneh as Chairman and appointed one of his loyalists within the country's Islamic community, Alhaji Jakaity Taylor, to the position. After Alhaji Jakaity Taylor's death in April 2002, Alhaji Ibrahim Sheriff, was selected with the approval of Taylor to fill the chairman position. The National Muslim Council remained divided into two rival councils during the period covered by this report [2003 to September 2004]. Konneh formed a separate council that gained more-widespread recognition and support among the population after former President Taylor's departure. Before being expelled from his position with the National Muslim Council, Sheik Kafumba Konneh had become vice president of the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia (IRC), a well-known organization led by Archbishop Michael Kpakala Francis that has tried to coordinate peace efforts between the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) rebels, and the ex-government/pro-Taylor forces. Konneh remained vice president of IRC during the period covered by this report.” [2b] (Section II)

6.19 According to the USSD RFR 2004:

“Although the law prohibits religious discrimination, Islamic leaders

complained of government discrimination against Muslims. Although there are some Muslims in senior government positions, many Muslims believed they were bypassed for desirable jobs. Unlike in the previous reporting period, there was no ban on street corner evangelism or preaching during the period covered by this report [2003 to September 2004].” [2b] (Section II)

6.20 The USSD RFR 2004 also noted that “Unlike in the past, there were no reports that persons were detained without charge or placed under house arrest based on their religious beliefs or practices. Under former President Taylor, some Muslims were arrested on suspicion of collaborating with, or sympathy with, LURD; however, it was unclear whether they were targeted specifically because of their religion. All religious and political detainees held by Taylor's government were released, and the NTGL did not detain anyone on the basis of their religion.” [2b] (Section II)

6.21 Ritualised murder has also been reported, but given the nature of these activities there is little information on them. According to the USSD RFR 2004:

“Ritual killings, in which body parts used in traditional indigenous rituals are removed from the victim, continued to occur. Little reliable information is readily available about traditional religions associated with ritual killings. The number of such killings was difficult to ascertain since police often describe deaths as accidents even when body parts were removed. Deaths that appeared to be natural or accidental sometimes were rumored to be the work of ritual killers. It is believed that practitioners of traditional indigenous religions among the Grebo and Krahn ethnic groups, which are concentrated in the southeastern counties, most commonly engage in ritual killings. Body parts of a member the group believed to be powerful were considered the most effective for the purposes of the rituals. The body parts most frequently removed included the heart, liver, and genitals. In some cases, the rituals reportedly involved eating body parts. Some traditional religious beliefs hold that human body parts, when consumed, grant special powers to the person who eats them. Fighters on all sides of the conflict (LURD, MODEL and the ex-Government/pro-Taylor forces) were reported to have engaged in such practices at times. During the civil war, faction leaders sometimes ate (and one faction leader had himself filmed eating) body parts of leaders of rival factions. Ritual killings for the purpose of obtaining body parts traditionally were committed by religious group members called "heart men"; however, since the civil war, criminals inured to killing also may sell body parts. Incidents of ritualistic killings increased during the reporting period [2003 to September 2004] due to the breakdown of law and order in rural counties, including Maryland County. During the first 3 months of 2004, there was an increase in the number of mysterious deaths in and around Monrovia and residents blamed such deaths on ritualistic killers but no evidences was found to support their claim.” [2b] (Section III)

6.22 The BBC reported that there were protests against ritual Killings in January 2005. The report dated 25 January 2005 stated:

‘Extra United Nations peacekeepers have been sent to south-eastern Liberia following violent protests over alleged ritual killings, the UN says. The extra

troops will enforce an overnight curfew in Maryland county. Over the weekend, a police station was attacked by people who said that the police had released suspected killers. The authorities would not confirm any ritual killings but the area is notorious for using human genital organs to make magic charms.” The report added “The Commander of the UN military force, Nigerian General Joseph Owonibi told the BBC that dozens of Ethiopian troops stationed in nearby Grand Gedeh county have been deployed in Maryland county to beef up the strength of Senegalese forces there. He said the weekend violence had "attracted the involvement of former combatants" roaming the region, and said police were investigating the claims of ritual killings. Gen Owonibi said some of the people who were alleged to have been killed for ritual purposed had later re-appeared.’ [7c] (p1)

6.23 The UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) in a report of 8 February 2005, noted:

‘The Liberian government has lifted a dusk-to-dawn curfew that was imposed two weeks ago on the southeastern port town of Harper following riots sparked off by a suspected outbreak of ritual killings, Information Minister William Allen said on Tuesday [8 February 2005]. He said the curfew was lifted on Monday [7 February 2005] following an improvement in security in Harper, the provincial headquarters of Maryland County. “The decision to lift the curfew was based on recommendations given to the chairman of the Liberia National Transitional Government... by a joint UN and Liberian government security assessment team that had just returned from Harper,” Allen told IRIN. A crowd of angry youths armed with sticks and metal bars went on the rampage in Harper on the weekend of 22 to 23 January [2005] following the arrest of three murder suspects in the nearby town of Pleebo. The mob stormed Harper police station and seized the three men who were suspected of killing people to get body parts for magic ceremonies. Two of the men were badly beaten up; the third disappeared. Allen said investigations into the cause of the riot were continuing.’ [5k] (p1)

Religious groups

6.24 The USSD RFR for 2004 noted:

“As much as 40 percent of the population practices either Christianity or elements of both Christianity and traditional indigenous religions. Approximately 40 percent practices traditional indigenous religions exclusively. Approximately 20 percent of the population practices Islam, which continued to gain adherents. There is a small percentage of atheists and Baha'i. The Lutheran, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal (AME), and AME Zion denominations, as well as Pentecostal churches are represented in the Christian community. Some of the Pentecostal movements are affiliated with churches outside the country, while others are independent.” [2b] (Section I)

6.25 The same report added “The country's Muslim population comes mainly from

the Mandingo ethnic group, who occupy the northern counties, and the Vai ethnic group, who are found predominantly in the western part of the country. Ethnic groups in the central, eastern, and southern parts of the country participate in the traditional religious practices of the Poro and Sande secret societies. Christians live throughout the country.” [2b] (Section I)

6.26 The USSD RFR for 2004 noted that “The country's civil war had a religious undertone in that the LURD rebels were mostly Mandingo Muslims while government troops were mostly animists and Christians. Ethnic tensions persisted in Lofa County between the predominantly Muslim Mandingo ethnic group and the Lorma ethnic group in which there are both Christians and animists.” [2b] (Section III)

6.27 The NTGL has attempted to be more even handed in its approach to religious groups. The USSD RFR for 2004 reflected that “The Government responded positively to requests for the restitution of religious properties. In the past, former President Taylor's militia confiscated the properties of ethnic Mandingo Muslims for their alleged involvement or sympathy with LURD. Since Taylor's departure from the country, most properties seized by his loyalists either have been abandoned or returned to their owners. All religions had equal opportunity to regain control over former property of religious organizations, in particular those used to hold religious services.” [2b] (Section II)

6.28 Overall the USSD RFR for 2004 noted that relations between the various religious groups are generally good, and that the NTGL appeared to be respecting religious freedoms. However, religious differences were reported to have been an aspect of the riots in October 2004, but there would appear to have been a number of other causative factors. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in their Country Report of 1 December 2004 noted:

“It is not clear exactly what sparked the riot, but competing versions of the story all point to a land dispute fuelled by growing resentment against the largely Muslim Mandingo ethnic group that makes up a significant proportion of LURD fighters. In the most credible version, the riot stemmed from a dispute in which a local resident refused to allow his land to be occupied by a group of Mandingos. After an initial squabble, relatives of the man's family set fire to a nearby mosque, inciting groups of Mandingo ex-combatants in the area to begin burning churches. Although Mr Bryant suggested in a speech the following day that the riots had been planned, it seems more likely that the initial violence was used as a pretext for larger disorder, exacerbated by the continuing and unresolved leadership struggle within LURD between a faction headed by Sekou Damate Conneh and a second group now led by the justice minister, Kabineh Ja'neh. The latter's house was burned during the riots, along with the residences of other senior LURD officials, including the transport minister, Vamba Kanneh, and the chief of protocol, Moussa Cisse. There are reports that Kuku Dennis and other former associates of Mr Taylor were responsible for these attacks. During a clean-up operation, UNMIL arrested some 250 people and removed a large weapons cache from the residence of a LURD general. It is rumoured that a significant proportion of those arrested spoke little or no English and were in fact foreigners from Guinea brought into Liberia by LURD. Whether or not this is true, it speaks of

an alarming trend towards xenophobia among Liberians that has emerged from the factionalisation of the civil war.” [4b] (p12&13)

6.29 In light of the above, which was supported by the UN Secretary-General’s reports, there would appear to have been a number of reasons for this violence. While religion may have been one of them, it does not appear to have been the initial cause. [18f] (p1&2)

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Freedom of Assembly & Association

6.30 The US State Department’s Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004, dated 28 February 2005 noted “The Constitution provides for the right of peaceful assembly, and the Government generally respected this right in practice; however, government security forces and UNMIL troops forcibly dispersed several violent demonstrations during the year [2004] ... In November [2004], the NTGL [National Transitional Government of Liberia] announced that demonstrators would be required to seek permits from the Justice Ministry 72 hours before planned demonstrations; however, the policy was not enforced.” [2a] (Section 2b)

6.31 The USSD 2004 also reported “Interim LNP [Liberian National Police] and UNMIL troops frequently used tear gas to disperse demonstrations during the year [2004]. There were reports of police brutality, particularly during demonstrations, and reports that UNMIL troops beat demonstrators. In January and early March [2004], violent student protests erupted when the University of Liberia, which had been closed since early 2003, failed to reopen, as promised; there were no reported injuries, and the University reopened in March [2004]. No action was taken against security forces who forcibly dispersed and beat demonstrators in 2003.” [2a] (Section 2b)

6.32 According to the USSD 2004, “The Constitution provides for the right of association, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. There were 18 registered political parties. Dozens of civil society organizations, organized around themes such as human rights, women’s issues, development objectives, poverty alleviation, health concerns, and worker’s associations, were active.” [2a] (Section 2b)

6.33 The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in their Country Report of 1 December 2004 noted:

“There are currently 18 registered political parties in Liberia, and as many as eight new parties are expected to try to register within the next several weeks. Although a handful of these parties have some experience and are beginning to open offices outside Monrovia, the majority are extremely weak and continue in existence only as “fronts” for individual candidates. Jacques Klein, the UN special representative of the secretary-general, Kofi Annan, and the head of UNMIL, has repeatedly called on Liberian politicians to consolidate into a smaller number of parties. However, efforts to form alliances in 1997 collapsed as individual personalities and rivalries precluded constructive co-operation between parties. At this early stage, likely candidates include a

number of already familiar faces, such as Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a former World Bank official, who came second to Mr Taylor in the 1997 elections with just under 10% of the vote; Winston Tubman, the son of Liberia's most influential and longest-serving president, William VS Tubman; Charles Brumskine, a former president pro-tem of the Liberian Senate, who fell out with Mr Taylor in 1999; and Varney Sherman, a prominent lawyer and member of the Liberian Action Party, which was once headed by Mr Bryant. Mr Sherman has already appeared with the NTGL chairman on a state visit to the US, leading some observers to criticise the latter for unfairly promoting his preferred candidate." [4b] (p14)

6.34 The EIU in the same report also noted:

"Nonetheless, the recent announcement by an international football star, George Weah, that he intends to become a candidate is likely to shake up this group considerably. Despite having no previous experience in national politics, Mr Weah is already presenting himself as an alternative to Liberia's "self- interested" political class. Finally, Mr Taylor's NPP [National Patriotic Party] should not be discounted, since it retains by far the largest network of offices and members throughout the country and, importantly, strong political experience gained during its six years in power. It is too early to say who will emerge as a frontrunner but, even if the political process is kept in check, enormous logistical and financial challenges will make holding elections by October 2005 very difficult." [4b] (p14)

Employment Rights

6. 35 The US State Department's Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004, dated 28 February 2005 noted "The Constitution provides workers, except members of the military and police, the right to associate in trade unions, and workers exercised this right in practice. The Constitution also prohibits unions from engaging in partisan political activity; however, government interference in union activities, especially union elections and leadership struggles, was common both before and during the civil war." [2a] (Section 6a)

6.36 The USSD 2004 also noted "The actual power that the unions exercised was extremely limited. Since the country's work force largely was illiterate, economic activities beyond the subsistence level were very limited, and the labor laws tended to favor management. The law does not prohibit anti-union discrimination; however, there were no reports of such discrimination during the year [2004]." [2a] (Section 6a)

6.37 While the union membership is generally allowed, the USSD 2004 noted, "With the exception of civil servants, workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively; these rights largely were unused during the year [2004] because of the lack of economic activity." [2a] (Section 6b) The report added that "A 1984 People's Redemption Council decree nullified labor laws that provided for the right to strike, but that decree has not been enforced for years. Due to the destruction of the economy and the estimated 70 percent unemployment rate, strikes were infrequent; however, work stoppages related to salary arrears from the former Taylor

administration occurred during the year [2004].” [2a] (Section 6b)

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People Trafficking

6.38 The US State Department’s Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004, dated 28 February 2005 noted “The law does not expressly prohibit trafficking in persons, and there were reports that trafficking occurred. During the year [2004], the Government obstructed the prosecution of suspected traffickers. Penal Code provisions against kidnapping, forced labor, and prostitution could be used to prosecute traffickers; however, the Government did not prosecute anyone for trafficking during the year [2004].” [2a] (Section 5)

6.39 According to the USSD 2004:

“In March [2004], members of the Ukrainian state security services repatriated several Ukrainian (sic) nationals who they claimed had been trafficked to a local nightclub. In May [2004], LNP and UNMIL’s trafficking-in-persons unit arrested the proprietress of the same nightclub on charges of kidnapping three Moroccan women; however, the proprietress was released on bail, and the case was indefinitely suspended due to obstruction by the Magistrate and Criminal Courts, which delayed the presentation of evidence and then the trial by not placing the case on the docket. The Government also refused to prosecute the case unless UNMIL, which does not pay court fees as a matter of policy, paid such fees; UNMIL charged that the Government’s refusal was an attempt to avoid action on the case.” [2a] (Section 5)

6.40 The USSD 2004 added “NGO estimates of the number of persons trafficked to the country during the year [2004] ranged between 20 and several hundred. Victims were trafficked from Morocco, Ukraine, and neighboring countries.” [2a] (Section 5) The report also noted “There were reports of forced labor, including by children, and the recruitment of child soldiers ... Citizens, including children, reportedly have been trafficked to the Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone, in some cases for commercial sexual exploitation.” [2a] (Section 5)

Freedom of Movement

6.41 The US State Department’s Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004, dated 28 February 2005 noted “The Constitution provides for these rights; however, the Government sometimes did not respect these rights in practice. As of year’s end [2004], government forces effectively controlled most of the country, including all major border crossings. A few small areas remained under the control of former LURD and MODEL combatants. There were reports that government officials harassed, delayed, and extracted bribes from ethnic Mandingos.” [2a] (Section 2d) The same report noted “At year’s end [2004], there were reports that LNP officers had resumed the practice of subjecting travelers to arbitrary searches and petty extortion at checkpoints in and around Monrovia; however, unlike during the previous year [2003], there were no reports that government forces raped travelers or beat and

robbed IDPS (sic). After October [2004] riots, the Government imposed a curfew in Monrovia ...; the curfew was lifted in November [2004].” [2a] (Section 2d)

6.42 The UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) noted in a report dated 2 February 2005, that there had been an improvement in the overall security situation:

“The authorities in Liberia have opened up seven more counties for the return of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees who fled their homes during the civil war. They include Lofa and Nimba counties in the north of the country, which experienced some of the worst fighting and a massive exodus of people. The Security Assessment Committee for Resettlement (SACR) decided last week that 13 out of 15 Liberian counties were now safe for refugees and IDPs to return to, but its decision was only made public by the UN refugee agency UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] on Tuesday [1 February 2004]. Only Sinoe and Grand Kru counties, remote districts on the southeast coast which were formerly strongholds of the rebel Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), remain officially closed to resettlement.” [5j] (p1)

6.43 IRIN in the same report added:

‘The SACR comprises representatives from Liberia's transitional government, UN agencies active in the country, the United Nations' 15,000-strong peacekeeping force in Liberia and civil society groups. “This [decision] is not about security per se, but about whether the entire UN fabric is ready to respond to the arrival of hundreds of people,” explained Paul Risley, a spokesman for the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). That was why the remote counties of Grand Kru and Sinoe had still not been cleared for resettlement, he added. “There are only the bare bones of UN infrastructure in these two counties. Both have Ethiopian peacekeepers and are considered calm – it’s just a question of logistics,” said Risley. However, elsewhere some security problems remain. Maryland County, a coastal district on the Ivorian border, was cleared for resettlement last year, but Risley said no convoys would be going to there until a night time curfew following riots in the town of Harper last month, had been lifted.’ [5j] (p1)

On the 8 February 2005, IRIN reported that the curfew in Harper had been lifted. [5k] (p1)

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6.B Human Rights - Specific Groups

Ethnic Groups

6.44 The US State Department's Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004, dated 28 February 2005 noted “The country has 16 indigenous ethnic groups; each spoke a distinct primary language and was concentrated

regionally. No ethnic group constituted a majority of the population.” [2a] (Section 5) The CIA Factbook of February 2005 gave the following breakdown of the ethnic groups in Liberia, “indigenous African tribes 95% (including Kpelle, Bassa, Gio, Kru, Grebo, Mano, Krahn, Gola, Gbandi, Loma, Kissi, Vai, Dei, Bella, Mandingo, and Mende), Americo-Liberians 2.5% (descendants of immigrants from the US who had been slaves), Congo People 2.5% (descendants of immigrants from the Caribbean who had been slaves).” [6] (p4)

6.45 The USSD Background Note of February 2005, noted that “The Kpelle in central and western Liberia is the largest ethnic group. Americo-Liberians who are descendants of freed slaves that arrived in Liberia early in 1821 make up an estimated 5% of the population. There also are sizable numbers of Lebanese, Indians, and other West African nationals who make up a significant part of Liberia’s business community. Because of the 1989-1996 civil war and its accompanying problem of insecurity, the number of Westerners in Liberia is low and confined largely to Monrovia and its immediate surroundings. The Liberian constitution restricts citizenship only to people of Negro descent.” [2c] (p2)

Mandingos

6.46 The USSD 2004 noted “During the year [2004], ethnic, religious, and other differences between Mandingos and non-Mandingos contributed to mob violence ... During the Taylor administration, many Mandingo citizens fled their homes as a result of discrimination, arbitrary arrests, and violence; however, during the year [2004], some Mandingos returned to Lofa, Bong, and Nimba counties, which were controlled by the Mandingo-dominated LURD.” [2a] (Section 5)

6.47 The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in a profile of June 2003, noted that LURD had drawn much of its support from the Mandingos, and its success has allowed some of them to return to Lofa county, and parts of Bong and Nimba counties, which are under LURD control. [7a] (p1-2)

Krahn

6.48 The USSD Background Note on Liberia of February 2005, noted that the Krahn are a southern based ethnic group, who held considerable power under the Doe regime, when Krahns dominated both the Government and the armed forces. This caused resentment, and was one of the reasons for the unpopularity of the Doe regime. [2c] (p2) The BBC, in its profile of June 2003, noted that MODEL had drawn much of its support from the Krahn tribe. [7a] (p1-2)

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Women

6.49 The US State Department’s Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004, dated 28 February 2005 noted “Domestic violence against women was widespread; however, neither the Government, the courts, nor the media seriously addressed the problem. Several NGOs in Monrovia and Buchanan

continued programs to treat abused women and girls and to increase awareness of their rights. Rape is illegal; however, the Government did not enforce the law, and rape was common, especially in IDP [Internal Displaced Persons] camps ... No perpetrators were prosecuted during the year [2004]." [2a] (Section 5)

6.50 The USSD 2004 also noted that FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] continued to be common in Liberia:

"FGM traditionally was performed on young girls in northern, western, and central ethnic groups, particularly in rural areas. Because social structures and traditional institutions, such as the secret societies that often performed FGM as an initiation rite, were undermined by the war, many experts believed that the incidence of FGM had dropped to as low as 10 percent. However, since the end of the civil war, traditional societies were reestablishing themselves throughout the country, and the practice of FGM continued. The most extreme form of FGM, infibulation, was not practiced. The Government took no action against FGM during the year [2004], and on July 18 [2004], the head of the INCHR [Independent National Commission on Human Rights] publicly condoned FGM on cultural grounds; however, he subsequently attempted to retract his statements." [2a] (Section 5)

6.51 The USSD 2004 reported that the position of women in society, sometimes led to their rights being curtailed:

"Women married under civil law can inherit land and property; however, women married under traditional laws are considered the properties of their husbands and are not entitled to inherit from their husbands or retain custody of their children if their husbands die. The Government prohibits polygyny; however, traditional laws permit men to have more than one wife. Women's organizations, particularly AFELL, continued to press for legislation on behalf of inheritance rights in traditional marriages." [2a] (Section 5)

6.52 While women rights may not be fully respected, the USSD 2004 reported "During the year [2004], professional women's groups--including lawyers, market women, and businesswomen--remained vocal about their concerns regarding government corruption, the economy, security abuses, rape, domestic violence, and children's rights. Government officials often responded negatively to public criticism." [2a] (Section 5)

6.53 Amnesty International in a report dated 14 December 2004 noted:

'Rape and other forms of sexual violence have become endemic in Liberia. While it is impossible to establish with any degree of accuracy the exact numbers of women and girls – of all ages – who have been affected by sexual violence, it has been pervasive throughout the conflict. Sexual violence, however, increased dramatically from the beginning of 2003, as fighting worsened and spread to previously unaffected parts of the country. Deliberate attacks on the civilian population, including in the capital, Monrovia, intensified as LURD forces advanced. Among those bearing the brunt of the fighting were hundreds of thousands of internally displaced

people and refugees from neighbouring Sierra Leone in camps in Montserrado County which were overrun in turn by forces of the former government and LURD. Women and girls were seized, raped, abducted, forcibly recruited to fight and subjected to sexual slavery. The fighting during three successive attacks by LURD forces on Monrovia in June and July 2003, when more than a thousand people died and many more were injured, was also characterized by widespread rape and other forms of sexual violence. The inhabitants of Monrovia and Montserrado County dubbed these attacks "World Wars I, II and III".' [15d] (p2)

6.54 Amnesty International's report called for effective action to be taken against those responsible for crimes against women, and added:

'Women and girls in Liberia remain vulnerable to sexual violence and sexual exploitation. Although now not directly related to continuing hostilities, rape and other forms of sexual violence have been exacerbated by the conflict. The increase in rape, and domestic violence, was acknowledged by the UNMIL Senior Gender Adviser when she met Amnesty International representatives in July 2004. Because of the pervasive nature of sexual violence during the conflict, and continuing impunity for these crimes, prevention of sexual violence must be a major consideration in efforts towards post-conflict reconstruction. Sexual violence against women and girls which is committed by non-combatants not only continues during armed conflict but is also exacerbated. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in internally displaced people's camps reported to Amnesty International representatives in July 2004 was committed by other residents in the camps rather than by combatants or former combatants. Living conditions in camps for the internally displaced and refugees have contributed considerably to the risks of sexual violence. Added to this is the increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation which results from loss of social and economic independence. In such situations, women and girls are vulnerable to being forced to exchange sex for goods and assistance such as food or protection.' [15d] (p22)

Children

6.55 The USSD 2004 noted "The Constitution prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children; however, this prohibition was ignored widely in many parts of the country, and there were reports that such practices occurred ..." [2a] (Section 6b)

6.56 The USSD 2004 also noted:

"More than 11,000 children were disarmed and demobilized during UNMIL's DDR program. ICRC efforts to reunite children who had been separated from their families during the war, including child soldiers, continued during the year [2004]. At year's end [2004], approximately 145 children had been reunited with their families; an estimated 300 children remained scattered within the country and in refugee camps outside of the country. Former child soldiers who turned over their weapons were entitled to a 3-month stay in an Interim Care Center (ICC), which offered medical aid, counseling, reading lessons, and help

tracing families. Many children refused to leave the ICCs due to concerns for their personal safety and lack of schools or other support in their communities.” [2a] (Section 5)

6.57 Human Rights Watch in their Overview on Liberia for 2004, while providing a different figure for the numbers disarmed, noted the following:

“During 2004, over ninety thousand combatants including some 12,600 women and six thousand children were disarmed and demobilized. However, concern was raised about the quantity of arms turned in— only one rifle, rocket launcher, pistol or mortar round for every three fighters on average— and because combatants were reluctant to surrender heavy weapons. A key challenge for Liberia is the degree to which disarmed combatants can be successfully reintegrated and trained. This is jeopardized by significant shortfalls in funding to support promised education or skills training programs. The dearth of programs, particularly in the capital Monrovia where the majority of ex-combatants have concentrated, makes them vulnerable for re-recruitment; since at least June 2004, commanders claiming to represent a fledgling Guinean insurgency and others claiming to support Guinean President Lansana Conte have engaged in the recruitment of ex-combatants, including children. In December 2003, the U.N. Security Council voted to reapply the arms embargo and a travel ban on individuals involved in previous attempts to destabilize the region.” [16] (p1&2)

6.58 The USSD 2004 also noted “There were thousands of children living on the streets of Monrovia; however, it was difficult to tell who were street children, former combatants, or IDPs. Nearly all youths witnessed atrocities, and some committed atrocities themselves. Approximately 100 underfunded orphanages operated in and around Monrovia; however, many orphans lived outside these institutions. These institutions did not receive any government funding and relied on private donations. In December [2004], the Government closed two orphanages due to “deplorable conditions” and listed another 32 for potential closure.” [2a] (Section 5)

6.59 In December 2004, the UN Secretary-General in his progress report on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), noted, “The UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] “Back to School” programme is making steady progress. Approximately 12,000 primary school teachers have completed an orientation programme and 660 teachers, of whom 53 per cent are women, have obtained primary school teaching certificates. Five hundred teachers have been trained in the accelerated learning programme teaching methodology.” His report added “The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) commenced its post-conflict education reconstruction activities in the country on 15 September [2004]. UNESCO plans include facilitating workshops for upgrading teacher trainers and reprinting formal school curricula for distribution among schoolteachers.” [18] (p11)

6.60 The Secretary General also noted in his report “UNICEF has made further progress in the reactivation of health clinics and routine immunization at local health facilities. Three hundred and ninety health workers have been trained in the management of malaria, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. Furthermore,

the Ministry of Health, supported by UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), in October and November [2004], immunized 1,799,861 children against polio. UNICEF also supported a government team that is monitoring water quality and developing an early warning system for potential cholera hot spots.” [18f] (p11)

Homosexuals

6.61 Both male and female homosexuality is illegal. There are no known reports of it being widely tolerated by society, or of there being a homosexual culture in Liberia. [13a] (p1-4) [13b] (p1-4)

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6.C Human Rights - Other Issues

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

6.62 According to the US State Department’s Report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) covering 2004:

“The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status in accordance with the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, and the Government has established a system for providing protection to refugees. In practice, the Government provided some protection against refoulement, the return of persons to a country where they feared persecution, and granted refugee status or asylum. The Government generally cooperated with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees and asylum seekers. The Government also provided temporary protection to individuals who may not qualify as refugees under the 1951 Convention/1967 Protocol.” [2a] (Section 2d)

6.63 According to the USSD 2004:

“Between 250,000 and 300,000 refugees from the country remained in neighboring countries, primarily in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana. Approximately 50,000 refugees have returned to the country without UNHCR assistance; however, many remained in IDP camps due to continuing instability in the country, particularly in rural areas. On September 22, the NTGL, the Government of Ghana, and the UNHCR signed an agreement for the progressive voluntary repatriation of 42,000 Liberian refugees living in Ghana; approximately 450 had been repatriated by year's end [2004].” [2a] (Section 2d)

6.64 In July 2003, the UNHCR requested that governments suspend the forced return of rejected Liberian asylum seekers for at least six months. A position paper revising this policy has not been issued to date. [17a] (p2)

6.65 The UNHCR, in a press release of 15 February 2005, stated that “UNHCR has

assisted the return of over 7,000 Liberian refugees from neighbouring countries since it started facilitating repatriation last October [2004]. The refugee agency expects more than 100,000 Liberian refugees to repatriate this year [2005].” [14b] (p1)

6.66 According to a UNHCR press release of 1 February 2005:

“The UN refugee agency has committed \$14 million to help the return and reintegration of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Liberia this year, just days after the Liberian government declared seven more counties safe for return. On Tuesday [1 February 2005], UNHCR Representative in Liberia Moses Okello announced that the agency would spend \$14 million to facilitate the return of IDPs from camps in and around Monrovia over the course of this year [2005]. Of this amount, more than \$5.5 million will be spent on non-food items and extra distribution outlets for returning IDPs, and \$3.5 million will go towards providing transportation allowance to get them home. The remaining \$5 million will fund reintegration projects in areas of return.” [14a] (p1)

6.67 The UNHCR in their Global Appeal 2005 – Liberia, reflected that during 2004, the Liberian authorities and other bodies had assisted in addressing the needs of refugees, IDPs and returning Liberian nationals. [17c] (p168&169) However, significant problems remained, and these were also outlined in the report:

“Although UNMIL troops have secured most parts of the country, the absence of local authorities, including administrative and law enforcement institutions, is still a key challenge in the quest for continued stability. Failure to secure funds for the rehabilitation and reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants leaves them vulnerable to re-cruitment by non-State actors within and across Liberia’s borders. Recovery of property and access to land are paramount concerns. Many returnees are likely to come home to find their land and houses occupied by ex-combatants and others. Most areas of return lack food, water and basic services on account of widespread dilapidation and war damage. Humanitarian needs are extensive and it will take time to build the capacity of the Government, NGOs and other partners to respond. Economic activities are limited and unemployment exceeds 80 per cent. Liberia’s roads, poor at the best of times, deteriorate drastically during the rainy season, becoming almost impassable.” [17c] (p169)

6.68 The same UNHCR report noted that as of January 2005, it planned for the following numbers for the main refugees communities in Liberia, 10,000 Ivorians, and 3,000 Sierra Leoneans. [17c] (p169) The report stated “UNHCR completed the voluntary repatriation operation for Sierra Leonean refugees in July 2004, having assisted more than 13,000 refugees to return home since January [2004].” [17c] (p169) The report added “UNHCR will pursue the promotional phase of the voluntary repatriation on an individual case-by-case basis in 2005. UNHCR will support the local integration prospects of nearly 2,500 residual Sierra Leonean refugees by ensuring that they have access to locally available services (education, health, justice, etc.) and land for agriculture and housing purposes. UNHCR will promote their naturalization.” [17c] (p170)

6.69 While the UNHCR in their Global Appeal 2005 – Liberia reflected the

successful repatriation of Sierra Leonean nationals who fled violence in their country, it also noted the increased numbers of Ivorians who fled to Liberia in 2004:

“Registration of the Ivorian refugees remains a key concern in Liberia and will be carried out in 2005 where feasible. Registration will ensure the security and safety of Ivorians in Liberia and will facilitate access to basic services and assistance such as food, non-food items, water and sanitation facilities. Capacity building for the local authorities includes training for immigration officials, police and the judiciary on the reception and treatment of refugees, as well as the promotion of refugee and human rights law and protection principles. In terms of durable solutions, UNHCR will explore voluntary repatriation and local integration as well as resettlement opportunities for Ivorian refugees who meet the criteria. Protection will also be reviewed for urban refugees, who include Ivorians, an increasing number of Sierra Leoneans and other nationals. A balanced programme will be developed for all nationalities, with self-reliance as the key objective.” [17c] (p170)

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United Nations

6.70 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in their country profile on Liberia dated 4 October 2005, reflected that Liberia is referred to under Security Council Resolution 1343 (2001):

“The UN Security Council first imposed sanctions against Liberia in 2001, in response to President Taylor's ongoing financial and military support for the Revolutionary United Front [RUF] in Sierra Leone, in the face of UN demands that Liberian support cease. The sanctions comprised an arms embargo, a travel ban and a ban on the import of rough diamonds. The Security Council updated sanctions against Liberia in resolution 1521 of 22 December 2003 when President Taylor went into exile, to reflect the improving but fragile situation in the country. The arms embargo remains in place, with certain specific exemptions, as does a travel ban against named individuals. There are also bans on the import of rough diamonds and timber from Liberia. The bans will be lifted once the NTGL has achieved prescribed goals relating to the control of the diamond trade and of timber-producing areas. On 12 March 2004 the Security Council adopted UNSCR 1532, which imposed an assets freeze against Charles Taylor, his close family and associates to prevent them using misappropriated funds to undermine peace and stability in Liberia. Successive Panels of Experts, established by the Secretary General at the request of the Security Council, have monitored the implementation and enforcement of sanctions against Liberia, and have reported breaches of the sanctions regimes to the Liberia sanctions committee.” [3] (p3)

Some Liberians and foreign nationals are also subject to a visa ban, because of their involvement with RUF, and in UN proscribed activities within Liberia. [18a] (p4&5) [18d] (p3)

6.71 Under Resolution 1509 (2003), a United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

was sanctioned for a period of twelve months. This resolution stated that UNMIL was to be made up of 15,000 peacekeepers, whose primary mission is to monitor the peace agreement, and assist in the maintenance of law and order. [18b] (p3) Under Resolution 1561 (2004) of September 2004, this deployment was extended for a further year, until September 2005. [18e] (p1)

6.72 The UN mission has now fully deployed. UNMIL reported that the number of personnel deployed in Liberia at the end of January 2005, was “15,775 total uniformed personnel, including 14,472 troops and 205 military observers; 1,098 civilian police supported by 489 international civilian personnel and 651 local staff.” [18g] (p1)

Humanitarian situation

6.73 The Secretary General of the United Nations in his first report on UNMIL deployment in December 2003 noted:

“UNMIL took over peacekeeping responsibilities from ECOMIL [ECOWAS Mission in Liberia] on 1 October [2003], as stipulated in Security Council resolution 1509 (2003). All of the approximately 3,600 ECOMIL troops, comprising contingents from Benin, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, were reassigned to UNMIL as United Nations peacekeepers. The newly designated UNMIL troops remained in the deployment areas established by ECOMIL in Monrovia, as well as on the main roads leading into the city and along the Kakata-Totota and Monrovia-Buchanan roads. Shortly after UNMIL took over from ECOMIL, the United States of America withdrew the significant military capabilities it had positioned off the coast of Liberia in August to support the ECOMIL forces.” [18c] (p1)

6.74 IRIN, in an article dated 17 August 2004, noted that while there had been some improvement within the country, conditions remained poor. The article stated:

“The electricity supply network was destroyed in 1990 at the start of the civil war, so the entire country now depends on private generators. These create a constant drone in the Mamba Point diplomatic quarter of Monrovia, where the offices of most UN agencies are situated. These office blocks and the hotels, restaurants, bars and nightclubs which have sprung up around them, are brightly lit by night, but most of the rest of Liberia remains in silent darkness.” The report added “Every hospital, school and public building has been stripped bare by war-time looting. Some of the street vendors selling soft drinks in Monrovia keep their bottles cool in special refrigerated boxes that were originally intended to preserve vaccines. The port of Monrovia is choked with wrecks and has been ransacked to the point that it barely functions.” The report also pointed out that “a whole generation of youngsters has been brought up without education. They have only known violence and warfare, often as a fighters (sic) in the conflict themselves. Liberia is one of the few countries in Africa where most parents are more literate than their children.” [5f] (p4&5)

6.75 There has been little improvement in the supply of utilities to Monrovia since August 2004. IRIN in an article dated 11 January 2005 noted:

“Most of Monrovia's water distribution pipes are so old, rusted and broken that the entire network will have to be ripped up and replaced before safe drinking water can start flowing through its taps again. The hydro-electric dam on the Saint Paul river which once supplied Monrovia and much of the rest of Liberia with electricity, has suffered heavy damage and requires massive repairs which are likely to take three or four years. And even if temporary diesel generators are rigged up to supply power to the capital, there is no longer any way to distribute it. Over the past decade looters have cut down most of Monrovia's electricity cables for sale as scrap metal. Those who can afford the luxury of electric light invest in a private generator for their personal use.” [5e] (p1)

6.76 The same article added:

“When the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was set up in October 2003 to help disarm the warring factions in Liberia and put the country back on its feet, Jacques Klein, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in Liberia, promised to make the restoration of normal electricity and water supplies in Monrovia a top priority. But more than a year later, little progress has been made and some Liberians think the authorities could have moved a lot faster. Ian Yhap, a Liberian electrical engineer who has set up his own power company AIMS-AFIPCO, told IRIN that his firm had offered to invest US\$25 million to install a power station in Monrovia and rehabilitate the city's electricity distribution in July last year, but its proposal had been turned down. Yhap said his company would have rehabilitated the power lines at no cost to the government and would have sold its entire power output to the Liberia Electricity Corporation, which in turn would have billed consumers. But he said the government had sidelined AIMS-AFIPCO in favour (sic) a more expensive project put forward by the UK-based generator rental company Aggreko.” [5e] (p2&3)

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ANNEX A: Chronology of Major Events

Pre 1847 - Liberia is the only West African country never to have had formal colonial status, and up to the end of the 18th century the various indigenous groups were left comparatively undisturbed by outsiders. Early in the 19th century rights to the territory were bought by United States philanthropic organisations, which wanted to use the area as a haven for the growing American free black population. From 1821 onwards, freed slaves from the US were resettled along parts of what is now Liberia's coast. The capital Monrovia was founded in 1822 as a haven for freed slaves from Americas, and is named after the American President James Monroe

1847 - Constitution modelled on that of the USA drawn up.

1847 July - Liberia becomes independent.

1917 - Liberia declared war on Germany, giving the Allies a base in West Africa.

1926 - Firestone Tyre and Rubber Company opens rubber plantation on land granted by government. Rubber production becomes backbone of economy.

1936 - Forced-labour practices abolished.

1943 - William Tubman elected president.

1944 - Government declared war on the Axis powers.

1951 May - Women and indigenous property owners vote in the presidential election for the first time.

1958 - Racial discrimination outlawed.

1971 - Tubman died and was succeeded by William Tolbert Jr.

1979 - More than 40 people are killed in riots following a proposed increase in the price of rice.

1980 - Master Sergeant Samuel Doe staged a military coup. Tolbert and 13 of his aides are publicly executed. A People's Redemption Council headed by Doe suspends constitution and assumes full powers.

1984 - Doe's regime allowed the return of political parties following pressure from the United States and other creditors.

1985 - Doe wins presidential election.

1989 - National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor began an uprising against the government.

1990 - Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) sends peacekeeping force. Doe is executed by a splinter group of the NPFL.

1991 - Ecowas and the NPFL agreed to disarm and set up an Interim Government of National Unity.

1992 - The NPFL launched an all-out assault on West African peacekeepers in Monrovia, the latter respond by bombing NPFL positions outside the capital and pushed the NPFL back into the countryside.

1993 - The warring factions draw up a plan for a National Transitional Government and a cease-fire, but this fails to materialise and fighting resumes.

1994 - The warring factions agreed a timetable for disarmament and the setting up of a joint Council of State.

1995 - Peace agreement signed.

1996 April - Factional fighting resumed, and spreads to Monrovia.

1996 August - West African peacekeepers initiate a disarmament programme, clear land mines and reopen roads, allowing refugees to return.

1997 July - Presidential and legislative elections held. Charles Taylor wins a landslide and his National Patriotic Party wins a majority of seats in the National Assembly. International observers declared the elections free and fair.

1999 January - Ghana and Nigeria accuse Liberia of supporting Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in Sierra Leone. Britain and the US threaten to suspend aid to Liberia.

1999 April - Rebel forces thought to have come from Guinea attack town of Voinjama. Fighting displaced more than 25,000 people.

1999 September - Guinea accused Liberian forces of entering its territory and attacking border villages.

2000 September - Liberian forces launch "massive offensive" against rebels in the north. Liberia accused Guinean troops of shelling border villages.

2001 May - UN Security Council reimposes arms embargo to punish Taylor for trading weapons for diamonds from rebels in Sierra Leone.

2002 January - More than 50,000 Liberians and Sierra Leonean refugees fled fighting. In February Taylor declared a state of emergency.

2003 March - Rebels advanced to within 10km of Monrovia.

2003 June - Talks in Ghana aimed at ending rebellion overshadowed by indictment accusing President Taylor of war crimes over his alleged backing of rebels in Sierra Leone.

2003 July - Fighting intensifies; rebels battle for control of Monrovia. Several hundred people are killed. West African regional group Ecomog agreed to provide peacekeepers.

2003 August - Nigerian peacekeepers arrived. Charles Taylor left Liberia after handing power to his deputy Moses Blah. US troops arrive. Interim government, rebels sign peace accord in Ghana. Gyude Bryant chosen to head interim administration.

2003 September/October - US forces pulled out. UN launches major peacekeeping mission, deploying thousands of troops.

2003 October - Gyude Bryant sworn in as head of state.

2003 December - UN peacekeepers begin to disarm former combatants and to deploy in rebel territory outside Monrovia.

2004 March - UN Security Council votes to freeze assets of Charles Taylor.

2004 October - Rioting broke out in Monrovia in late October and lasted several days. After some delay, the Liberian Supreme Court has approved the freezing of assets of the former president, Charles Taylor, and his associates. The resumption of fighting in Côte d'Ivoire resulted in an influx of thousands of refugees during 2004.

2004 November - In addition to having secured most of the country, UNMIL had disarmed more than 95,000 ex-combatants, marking the end of the disarmament programme with a ceremony in Monrovia in November 2004. The former fighting forces of the former government of ex-president Charles Taylor, as well as the two former rebel groups LURD and MODEL were officially disbanded.

2005 February - The Liberian government lifted a dusk-to-dawn curfew that was imposed in January 2005 on the southeastern port town of Harper following riots sparked off by a suspected but unproven outbreak of ritual killings.

Adapted from the BBC timeline dated 2 November 2004, BBC report of 25 January 2005, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Liberian Country Profile of July 2004 and EIU report of December 2004, and IRIN article of 8 February 2005.

Sources [4a] [4b] [7d] [5k] [7c]

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ANNEX B: Political Organisations

- ALCOP** (All Liberian Coalition Party)
It came third in the 19 July 1997 elections, winning 4% of the vote, with two seats in the Senate and three in the House of Representatives. ALCOP was formed from former members of ULIMO-K (United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia-Kromah), under the leadership of Alhaji G V Kromah. [1] (p642) [10] (p301)
- ECOWAS** (Economic Community of West African States)
The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 by 15 West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Cape Verde joined ECOWAS in 1977, and Mauritania withdrew in early 2000. The community's principal objective is to establish a customs union and a common market to promote the free movement of goods and people within West Africa. ECOWAS has an executive secretariat headed by a Ghanaian former minister, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, a 120-member parliament and a court of justice, all based in the Nigerian capital, Abuja. Decision-making powers are vested in a council of ministers and a chairman (who is elected annually—currently the president of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor); supreme authority rests with the annual conference of heads of state and government. [4b] (p39)
- LPP** (Liberia People's Party)
Led by Togba Nah-Tipoteh, it won 1.6% of the vote in the 19 July 1997 elections, obtaining one seat in the House of Representatives. [1] (p642) [10] (p301)
- LURD** (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy)
A group led by Sekou Damate Conneh that was opposed to former President Taylor. In August 2003, LURD signed a peace agreement with the Liberian Government, which provided for its inclusion in a power-sharing administration. [1] (p642)
- MODEL** (Movement for Democracy in Liberia)
A group led by Thomas Nimely Yaya that was opposed to former President Taylor, its members are mostly drawn from the Krahn tribe. MODEL is. In August 2003, MODEL signed a peace agreement with the Liberian Government, which provided for its inclusion in a power-sharing administration. [1] (p642)
- NDPL** (National Democratic Party of Liberia)

Led by Dr. George E. Saigbe Boley and a participant in the 19 July 1997 elections. [1] (p642)

- NPFL** (National Patriotic Front of Liberia)
Formed in 1989, it began the civil war under the leadership of Charles Taylor, with an invasion into Nimba county that led to its control of large parts of Liberia. It acquired largely Gio and Mano support, and is said to have been responsible for a number of atrocities committed against members of the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups. Between 1990 and 1994, it controlled much of Liberian territory, but ceased to be active in January 1997. In 1990, a substantial faction of the NPFL split from Taylor, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia, but this group collapsed in 1992. [1] (p621-623)
- NPP** (National Patriotic Party)
Led by Charles Taylor, it won approximately 75% of the total vote, obtaining 21 out of the 26 seats in the Senate and 49 out of 64 in the House of Representatives in the 19 July 1997 elections. [1] (p623) [10] (p301)
- NTGL** (National Transitional Government of Liberia)
A transitional Government, which took over from the interim government of Moses Blah on 14 October 2003. The Government is made up of representatives from LURD, MODEL, the former Taylor government, civil society and political parties. The NTGL is led by, former businessman, Gyude Bryant. The main task of the government is to rebuild governance institutions and to organise elections by October 2005. [1] (p628&642) [3] (p2)
- ULIMO** (United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia)
Formed in 1991, by supporters of the late President Samuel Doe and members of the Liberian army. Split into two factions in 1994: ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K. Both factions of ULIMO would appear to have fully disbanded prior to the election in 1997. [1] (p621) [10] (p300&301)
- ULIMO-J** (United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia-Johnson)
A faction of the original ULIMO, led by Roosevelt Johnson. In early 1996, ULIMO-J officials announced Johnson's deposition, resulting in a further split between Johnson's supporters and those loyal to the new leadership. [1] (p622)
- ULIMO-K** (United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia-Kromah)
A faction of the original ULIMO, led by Alhaji G V Kromah since 1994, ceased to be active in January 1997. [1] (p622)
- UNMIL** (United Nation Mission In Liberia)
On 19 September 2003, the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 1509 authorising a 15,000 strong Peacekeeping force to provide security in Liberia. UNMIL began to deploy on 1 October 2003. UNMIL has a broad and robust mandate covering peacekeeping, criminal justice, human rights, child protection, Disarmament,

Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), and public information. [3] (p2)

UP

(Unity Party)

With Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as presidential candidate, it was the runner-up in the 19 July 1997 elections, but won only 9.6% of the total.

[1] (p623&242)

UPP

(United People's Party)

Led by Wesley Johnson, it won approximately 2.5% of the vote in the elections on 19 July 1997. [1] (p623&642)

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ANNEX C: Prominent People

BRYANT Gyude

Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL). A 55-year-old businessman and member of the Liberia Action Party (LAP), Mr Bryant is also a leader of the Episcopal Church. A member of the Grebo ethnic group of southern Liberia, which remained relatively neutral during the civil war, Mr Bryant graduated in economics from Cuttington University College. [4a] (p14-15)

CONNEH Sekou Damate

A 43-year-old who became head of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) owing to his close family connections with LURD's main political and financial backer, Lansana Conté, the president of Guinea. Mr Conneh worked as a tax collector for the Ministry of Finance before fleeing to Guinea in 1990 as a result of the escalating civil war in Liberia. Mr Conneh is a Muslim, born in Gbarnga, a stronghold of Charles Taylor during the 1990s, and is from the Mandingo ethnic group, which was distrusted and persecuted by the National Patriotic Party (NPP). When several veteran Taylor opponents in the Mandingo-dominated rebel movement, Ulimo-K, reorganised themselves as LURD in April 1999, they invited Mr Conneh to become chairman. Since the peace agreement in August 2003, tensions have increased within LURD, and calls have been made for the removal of Mr Conneh. In a press release on 8 January 2004, 40 military commanders demanded his replacement by his, reportedly estranged, wife, Ayesha Keita Conneh. Mrs Keita has long been recognised as the power behind the throne, primarily because of her close relationship with one of the rebel group's main backers, the president of Guinea, Lansana Conté, to whom she serves as a spiritual adviser. The main complaints specified by the commanders included the failure of Mr Conneh to reward them for their military successes against the Taylor regime and the fact that the majority of LURD positions in the NTGL were given to relatives and supporters of Mr Conneh, in many cases reportedly in return for cash payments. A further apparent point of contention was the appointment of the brother of Mr Conneh's estranged wife to the position of assistant finance minister. [4a] (p10&15)

DOE Samuel Kanyon

Former Non-Commissioned Officer in the Armed Forces of Liberia. Led coup against Tolbert government in 1980 and assumed power as leader of the PRC (People's Redemption Council). Publicly executed in September 1990, by a splinter group of the NPFL, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia. [1] (p621)

JOHNSON Gen. Roosevelt

Commander of Krahn ULIMO-J (United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia-Johnson) faction, since it split from the original ULIMO in 1994. [1] (p622)

JOHNSON Wesley Momoh

Vice-chairman of the NTGL. A 60-year-old accountancy lecturer and Baptist church elder who has been active in local politics for the past 25 years. Educated in the US,

Mr Johnson is the leader of the opposition United People's Party (UPP). On his return from the US, Mr Johnson helped to form the country's first opposition party, the Progressive Alliance of Liberia, in 1978. Mr Johnson also served as a member of the Interim Legislative Assembly from 1990 to 1994, under the interim government of national unity headed by Amos Sawyer. [4a] (p15)

JOHNSON-SIRLEAF Ellen

Leading figure in the Unity Party (UP). A former UN economist, she has resided outside the country for long periods (largely in Côte d'Ivoire). She failed to win the vote to become the chairman of the NTGL, but this allows her to stand in the 2005 elections. [4a] (p15)

KROMAH Alhaji G V

Leader of the Mandingo ULIMO-K, since the original ULIMO split in 1994. In the July 1997 elections, he led the ALCOP to third place. [1] (p622&623)

TAYLOR Charles Ghankay

Ex-president and creator of the former ruling NPP. He led an invasion force in late 1989 from Côte d'Ivoire, which resulted in internecine fighting until elections were held in 1997. He won the presidential election and ruled with an authoritarian zeal. Mr Taylor was a prominent supporter of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which had destabilised the subregion for years. Mr Taylor was forced out of office in August 2003, and is currently living in exile in Nigeria. The Special Court for Sierra Leone issued an indictment against President Taylor in June 2003. This indictment was for war crimes, and crimes against humanity, committed since 1996 in the Sierra Leonean civil war. [4a] (p15) [3] (p2)

TIPOTEH Togba Nah

Leader of the Liberian People's Party (LPP). A former university professor and minister of planning, Mr Tipoteh is an influential opposition figure. The only major political opposition leader who remained in the country after the 1997 elections (which he contested, winning 1% of the vote), his criticism of government policies earned him the disdain of NPP stalwarts but respect of other Liberians. [4a] (p15)

YAYA Thomas Nimely

The 47-year-old chairman of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (Model). Mr Yaya, a Krahn, followed his father in becoming a clinical nurse, before moving to the US, where he lived for 20 years and assumed US citizenship. Krahn tribesmen of the former president, Samuel Doe, are believed to form the core of Model's leadership, and the rebel group is widely thought to receive its financial support from Côte d'Ivoire. Following the 2003 peace agreement he became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the transitional government. [4a] (p15)

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